

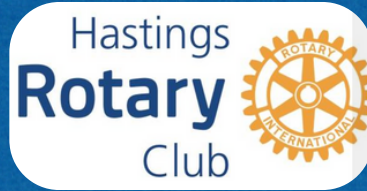
Case for Support: Revitalizing the Hastings Skatepark *A Community Space Worth Investing In*

For riders who never felt at home in traditional athletics, the skatepark became a place where they were welcomed, not pushed away. It offered an alternative to skating in business parking lots or on sidewalks and became a true “third place” — neither home nor school, but somewhere to be accepted, encouraged, and safe.

The park has also inspired deep community involvement. For years, local volunteers, including a dedicated Wednesday night mentorship group and a local pastor, have shown up weekly to feed kids, offer support, and foster positive connections. Their X Games-style annual competition became a beloved event, celebrating the creativity and athleticism of Hastings youth. These volunteers have also helped maintain the facility, often extending the life of aging equipment long past its usable span. This is not a forgotten corner of town — it is a community-supported space people have fought to preserve.

Today, the Hastings Rotary Club is carrying that commitment forward by leading the effort to revitalize and expand the Hastings Skatepark. Rotary’s involvement reflects a shared belief: investing in young people strengthens the entire community.





The Need: Safety, Space, and a Skatepark Built for the Future

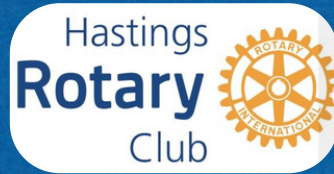
Built in 1999–2000, the Hastings Skatepark has served thousands of riders over its 25+ years. But after decades of heavy use and Michigan winters, the facility has exceeded its lifespan. Despite the City’s efforts and years of volunteer-led repairs, the park now faces significant concerns:

- Outdated and deteriorating equipment, including unsafe surfaces
- Cracking and uneven riding areas
- A layout that no longer meets modern safety and design standards
- A footprint too small for current usage
- Mixed-use demands (skateboards, scooters, inline skates, BMX) that exceed what the space was designed to support

Demand for safe, accessible recreation is also rapidly increasing. More than **100 new residential units** are under construction adjacent to First Ward Park, bringing new families, youth, and adults into the neighborhood. As population density grows, so does the need for high-quality, inclusive outdoor spaces.

Without improvement, riders will continue to be pushed into unsafe alternatives — sidewalks, parking lots, and downtown streets — simply because the skatepark cannot meet modern needs.

This project is no longer just about replacing old equipment. It is about building for a growing, vibrant community.



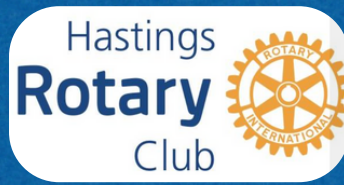
The Vision: A Modern, Inclusive, All-Ages Skatepark

The revitalized Hastings Skatepark will be a professionally designed hybrid modular and concrete facility that reflects national best practices for safety, durability, and flow. This new design will:

- Create a smooth, long-lasting concrete riding surface
- Feature elements for beginners to advanced riders
- Improve visibility and safe movement throughout the park
- Support multiple riding styles, including skateboarding, scootering, inline skating, and BMX
- Expand the park's footprint to accommodate increased usage
- Strengthen ongoing youth outreach, mentoring, and programming
- Serve both longstanding riders and new residents of the expanding First Ward neighborhood
- Enhance recreational tourism and draw regional visitors to Hastings



This project does not replace the past; it honors it and builds upon it.



Community Impact: Strengthening Hastings for the Next Generation

A revitalized skatepark will offer meaningful benefits across the community:

Youth Development & Mentorship

- Expands safe, supervised space for youth to gather
- Strengthens the weekly mentorship and outreach programs already happening onsite
- Offers opportunities for leadership, skill-building, and positive peer culture

Neighborhood Revitalization

- Enhances First Ward Park as new housing grows around it
- Increases safety and visibility in the area
- Improves quality of life for families, youth, and residents

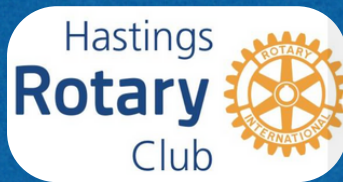
Health & Wellness

- Promotes physical activity for all ages
- Supports mental well-being through connection, creativity, and belonging
- Provides an inclusive athletic outlet accessible to nontraditional athletes

Economic & Community Engagement

- Creates potential for competitions and community events
- Draws visitors from across West Michigan
- Encourages local business engagement and sponsorship

For many, this park has been a constant source of stability and connection. Now it deserves to be as strong and dependable as the people who rely on it.



Funding the Project

Preliminary research suggests that revitalization projects of this scope often fall within a range of \$-\$, with final costs determined during the design phase. Funding will include:

- Grant support
- Local business sponsorships
- Individual and community contributions
- In-kind support
- Leadership from the Hastings Rotary Club



Rotary, together with civic partners and community members, is committed to ensuring long-term stewardship and sustainability of the skatepark.

How You Can Help

This is a community-driven project, and it requires community partners. Your support — through funding, sponsorship, advocacy, or in-kind assistance — helps ensure that Hastings riders of all ages have a safe, welcoming, and inspiring place to belong.

Your investment today strengthens a space that has been changing lives for decades and will continue to do so for generations to come.



A Skatepark for the Next 25 Years

For over 25 years, the Hastings Skatepark has been sustained by the passion and dedication of riders, families, volunteers, and mentors. With Rotary's leadership, we now have the opportunity to build a skatepark that truly reflects the heart and promise of this community.

A revitalized facility will ensure that every rider — from the child stepping onto a board for the first time to the adult who remembers the original ramps — has a ***place to learn, grow, and belong for the next 25 years and beyond.***

